

## **Establishing a Questioning Culture in a Junior Classroom.**

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### **Question starters:**

- What, where, why, who, when, how?

### **Different types of questions:**

- A Fat Question has lots of possible answers:
- Where does the cat on the farm go?
- A Skinny Question has one answer or a yes or no answer:
- How does the egg come out of the chicken?

### **Purpose of questions in the Junior School:**

- To find out more
- To wonder
- So that things make sense

### **Questioning Activities**

- Have a question board. Write out questions on Post –Its and stick up on the ‘Question’ side. Shift it to the ‘Answered’ side when the answer has been written beside the question.
- Use two hoops, draw circles with chalk or make a plastic sheet with two different sides and then organise the questions:  
fat skinny; categorising – animals/ food / topic/ type of question; question to answer first or later; most important questions and other questions
- This encourages a conversation loop.

### **What’s in the box**

Every day a child gets to choose an object to hide in the box. The other children then have to ask ‘clever questions’ to guess ‘What is in the box?’ in the least number of questions. Questions could have full answers or only yes or no answers. The children soon realise not to ask ‘a waste of a question’.

This simple activity has encouraged the following skills:  
Communication, Thinking, Listening

### **5 why’s**

Can be done in pairs, groups or whole class. Using a picture or object, the child asks a why question. The question is answered and the next why question comes out of the answer. This continues until 5 why questions have been asked. As the children develop this skill, their questions and responses become more advanced.

### **What am I?**

One child has a picture stuck on their back that everyone else has already seen. The child has to ask questions to work out what the picture is.

### **Questions and a statement**

Class divided into small groups of three or four.  
Each group is given a different picture and has to come up with a specified number of questions and statements  
Each group member then shares back to the rest of the class.

### **Ask the book/author a question**

- During group or shared reading each child is given a question starter.
- During the orientation of the book, encourage each child to come up with a question.
- During the reading they can use their card whenever they want to ask a question of the others.
- Independent group follow up activity.
- On – going process.
- Keep asking the children – Are there any questions that need answering?

### **I want to know....**

- Done as a follow up activity.
- Children ask questions relating to other things they want to know about that topic.
- E.g. The donkey in the lion's skin  
What happened to the lion?  
Where the bones and what are happens to them?  
How are animal skins dried?

### **Using questions in a modelling book**

- Write down questions.
- Children can circle question starters or key words in the questions.
- Write a question in the middle of a bubble map. The children can think of their own answers.
- Can use a variety of graphic organisers.
- Encourage prediction by pasting a picture from the book in the middle of a page. The children can record their answers around the picture.

### **Using questions to give opinions**

- Used either during guided reading or as a follow up activity.
- Use questions to prompt opinions.
- Each child has a turn.
- Children discuss their answers with the rest of the group.  
Leads on to interaction  
I wonder why...  
What does this remind you of?  
What did the story make you think about?  
What surprised you?

### **The hot seat**

Take a character from the story. Child to wear a sign or character hat to help them become the character.  
The other children ask questions  
Why did you..  
What do you think about....  
Why did you say...  
How did you feel...

### **Question Dice**

Question starters are written on the sides of a dice.  
Roll the dice and children have to think of questions about a topic.

### **Question and Answer Jigsaw Puzzle**

Write an answer on the Answer piece.  
Children work in groups to think of questions that have that answer.

### **Photo story questions**

A group of children take a series of photographs and put them into photo story. They pose a question/s before they show their story. They could record themselves asking questions about each photo. The other children have to discuss possible answers.

### **Using question prompts for Writing**

- Children use question starter cards to plan/check their writing.
- When using a plan, encourage the children to answer the questions starters. The next day they can write their recount remembering what they wrote in their plan.
- When using as a check, the children are asking have we got all the information.

### **Resources**

- X-roads Wiki: [xroads.wikispaces.com](http://xroads.wikispaces.com)
- Go to Thinking/Questioning on the navigation bar
- How to succeed with Questioning written by Sally Godinho and Jeni Wilson
- Many thanks to our Cluster facilitator, Barbara Wenn for her wealth of knowledge
- Linda Clarke: [lindageoff@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:lindageoff@slingshot.co.nz)
- Kari Ter – Morshuizen: [karimark@slingshot.co.nz](mailto:karimark@slingshot.co.nz)